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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for detecting at least one of handling of electrodes and removing of the electrodes from a package ~~containing the electrodes, the electrodes being mutually releasably connected by an electrically conductive medium, the apparatus comprising:~~

a pair of electrodes suitable for attachment to a patient and each including a conductor for sensing a patient electrical characteristic or delivering electricity to a patient;

an impedance element included with at least one of the electrodes which varies when an electrode is flexed or bent;

a current delivery circuit, coupled to the electrodes, which causes current to flow through the impedance element;

a monitoring circuit ~~means~~ coupled to the impedance element for monitoring a magnitude of an electrical characteristic resulting from the flow of measured from an electrical circuit having an electric current path through said electrodes and said mediumthe impedance element; and,

wherein ~~means for identifying~~ an occurrence of at least one of said handling and said removing of the electrodes is identified by the ~~based on variation over time in said magnitude~~ of the impedance of the impedance element.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the monitoring ~~means circuit~~ includes ~~means~~ a circuit for monitoring a magnitude of impedance, and wherein the identifying ~~means~~ includes ~~means for identifying said occurrence~~ is identified based on a variation over time in the magnitude of the impedance.

4. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~3, wherein ~~said identifying means is configured to identify said~~ the occurrence is identified based on plural variations over time in ~~said the~~ magnitude.

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5. (currently amended) ~~An arrangement comprising the~~ The apparatus, electrodes and medium of claim 1, wherein:

the ~~medium~~ impedance element resides between the electrodes ; and

the electrodes and the ~~medium~~ impedance element are contained within ~~the~~ a package prior to ~~said~~ the occurrence to be identified.

6. (currently amended) ~~The arrangement~~ apparatus of claim 5, ~~further including an electrically nonconductive element that is disposed adjacent to said medium and wherein the impedance element comprises an electrically-conductive hydrogel located between the electrodes to act as a blocking mechanism that lengthens said electric current path.~~

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A method for detecting at least one of handling of electrodes and removing of the electrodes from a package containing the electrodes, the electrodes ~~being mutually releasably connected by an electrically conductive medium~~ including an impedance element exhibiting an impedance which varies when the impedance element is flexed or bent , the method comprising the steps of:

monitoring a magnitude of an electrical characteristic measured from an electrical circuit having an electric current path through ~~said electrodes and said medium~~ the impedance element; and

identifying an occurrence of at least one of ~~said~~ handling and ~~said~~ removing the electrodes based on variation over time in ~~said~~ the magnitude.

9. - 13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) ~~An~~ defibrillator apparatus comprising:

a defibrillator electrode pad including an impedance element, the impedance of which changes when the electrode pad is deflected or bent;

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an integral belt surrounding the pad; and

~~a package surrounding the belt and the pad and to which the belt is attached~~monitoring circuit
coupled to the electrode pad and operable to monitor the impedance of the impedance element;

wherein a composition and a thickness of the belt ~~allows~~causes an operator to ~~manually break~~
~~the belt to apply~~flex or bend the pad when preparing to apply the pad to a medical patient in need of
defibrillation.

15. - 18. (canceled)

19. (new) The method of Claim 8, further comprising locating the electrodes in a package
and electrically connecting the electrodes to the electrical circuit.

20. (new) The method of Claim 19, wherein monitoring further comprises monitoring the
electrical characteristic with an electrical circuit of a defibrillator.

21. (new) The method of Claim 8, wherein monitoring further comprises monitoring the
magnitude of an electrical characteristic of an electrically-conductive hydrogel of the electrodes.

22. (new) The defibrillator apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the belt is made of at least one of
paper, plastic, and metal.

23. (new) The defibrillator apparatus of Claim 22, wherein the impedance element
comprises an electrically-conductive hydrogel of the electrodes.